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UNCLAS HARARE 001438

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/PDPA FOR DALTON, MITCHELL AND SIMS  
NSC FOR JENDAYI FRAZER  
LONDON FOR GURNEY  
PARIS FOR NEARY  
NAIROBI FOR PFLAUMER

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL KPAQ KMDR ZI

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION PRESIDENT BUSH'S TRIP TO AFRICA;  
HARARE

- ¶1. Under headline "President finally vindicated" the government-controlled daily "The Herald" dedicated its July 15 edition to declaring that the just-ended five-nation tour in Africa, especially South Africa, by President George W. Bush had managed to shore up Robert Mugabe's waning political fortunes. Excerpts follow:
- ¶2. "A clear national, regional and international consensus is now emerging in support of Zimbabwe's principled position to determine its own destiny with events over the past week testifying to this. After almost three years of being condemned, ostracized, demonized and ridiculed, President Mugabe has finally been vindicated. In one swoop, the president has managed to turn the tide against those who were agitating for his 'overthrow' before the completion of his new term. . . .The football coup (Zimbabwe's maiden qualification for the African Nations Cup finals in Tunisia) was followed by a diplomatic victory in South Africa when American President George W. Bush dropped his anti-President Mugabe crusade and decided to follow the lead of President Thabo Mbeki's stance that Zimbabwe's problems should be solved by Zimbabweans. Even ¶U. S. Secretary of State Mr. Collin (sic) Powell, who had, prior to President Bush's visit to Africa, called for the ouster of President Mugabe, backtracked from this position. . . ."

SULLIVAN